

were noted: "Violet" for "Violet" on page xxiv, and "Arnette" for "Arneth" on page 534. L. H. B.

Digestion and Metabolism. The Physiological and Pathological Chemistry of Nutrition. For students and physicians. By Alonzo Englebert Taylor, M. D., Rush Professor of Physiological Chemistry, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Octavo, 560 pages. Cloth, \$3.75, net. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia and New York, 1912.

We have long been of the opinion that it is a waste of time to read the average medical book written hurriedly by a busy practitioner who repeats what has been better said before, and whose only justification for writing is that he attempts to bring the subject matter to date. Such books, even from the pens of men whom we all respect, may be woefully disappointing and lacking power to inspire thought and further study.

The very favorable reception accorded to Hewlett's translation of Krehl's book several years ago showed how eager the American clinician is to see disease from the viewpoint of the physiological chemist. We feel that we must look to them for most of the advances that medicine is to make from now on, but we have neither the time nor the technical knowledge to wade through the already enormous literature and to pick out what we need. It is this service that Dr. Taylor has so ably performed for us.

Many will decry the lack of references but the author explains that he found it impossible to emphasize here and re-ect there without entering into long and technical discussions which would have interfered with its value to the clinician. The book is more helpful to the average man because it does represent the judgment of an expert and his interpretation of the subject matter.

The book contains ten chapters on the composition of food stuffs; the theory of ferment action; digestion; carbohydrate metabolism; fat metabolism; protein metabolism; the metabolism of creatin-creatinin, and of purins; auto-intoxication; metabolism as a whole, and the relation of body heat and body temperature.

Although the book inspires one with hope for the future and suggests many avenues along which our therapeutics may advance, it also discourages by showing us our great ignorance. Is there one of us who would think for a moment of trying to adjust a Burroughs adding machine, or who would offer advice to Ehrlich when a batch of dimethyldiamidodiarsenobenzol went wrong. Yet, when on insufficient evidence we get the idea that a gouty patient's blood has become too acid, we boldly attempt to correct it. As Taylor says, (page 451) "There is in the blood no alkaline reaction to augment and no way to increase it if it were there to be increased," and he says, "It is very fortunate for us that the body maintains the blood's neutrality with great tenacity."

The following remarks could apply to many topics, "Experimentally the subject is extremely complicated, while theoretically the data at our disposal are not such as to permit us to draw even approximate conclusions." He speaks with scorn of some of our foibles. Of oxaluria he says, (page 273) "It has been widely employed as a convenient receptacle for the deposition of undiagnosed cases of illness of all kinds." Of the uric acid diathesis he says, (page 455) "It is a euphonious expression widely used for several decades as a cloak for ignorance. But just as the fashion in furs changes, so fashions in the cloak of ignorance change and the uric acid diathesis has been lately relegated to the closet for old clothes."

From habit we forbid red meat to the nephritic and gouty even after we know that there is more purin in chicken than in beef and mutton and

that the actual differences are so slight that they are not worth bothering about. It takes many years before physiology and experimental pharmacology materially change medical practice and when the physician reluctantly gives up his hobbies they are passed on to the household for another hundred years or more.

There is nothing so annoying to the average mind as a new fact, especially when it upsets cherished beliefs, but as scientific physicians we must face these things bravely.

Undoubtedly Dr. Taylor's peers will differ from him on many points but for the clinician who is studying along these lines, there is no book that we can more heartily recommend. W. C. A.

TREATMENT OF FRACTURES.

The American Surgical Association has appointed a committee consisting of Drs. William L. Estes, South Bethlehem, Pa.; Thomas W. Huntington, San Francisco, Cal.; John B. Walker, New York City; Edward Martin, Philadelphia, and John B. Roberts, Chairman, 313 S. 17th street, Philadelphia, to report on the Operative and Non-operative of Closed and Open Fractures of the Long Bones and the value of radiography in the study of these injuries. Surgeons, who have published papers relating to this subject within the last ten years, will confer a favor by sending two reprints to the chairman of the committee. If no reprints are available, the titles and places of their publication are desired.

JOHN B. ROBERTS, Chairman,
313 S. 17th Street, Philadelphia.

A RESTRICTED MATERIA MEDICA.

At the recent meeting of the American Medical Association, the Section on Pharmacology and Therapeutics devoted one of its sessions to a discussion of the desirability of a restricted materia medica. Using the investigations of the A. M. A. Chemical Laboratory as evidence, W. A. Hynson pointed out that it was a physical impossibility for the pharmacist to guarantee the quality of the immense number of drugs which he is obliged to carry in stock. Discussing the question from the standpoint of the teacher, E. LeFevre emphasized the fact that it was impossible to treat in anything but a superficial manner the vast number of drugs, whose consideration is made necessary to enable the student to pass his State board examination for licensure. O. T. Osborne next treated of the more valuable drugs and took the ground that a very small number of drugs were sufficient to permit proper treatment of the conditions that demand the attention of the physician. Finally M. I. Wilbert outlined the steps which the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry is taking in the preparation of a list of the more useful and dependable drugs, which list it is hoped teachers and examiners will take as a basis for their materia medica instruction and examination. He stated that a brief manual treatment of these drugs is in preparation and that this is to be followed by a more comprehensive work, which will provide a reliable and up-to-date treatise on the value and use of the important medicaments.

It will be generally agreed, that 90 per cent., if not 99 per cent. of the drugs described in our dispensaries are superfluous and might be eliminated with advantage and thus encourage a better knowledge of the remaining ones. All will agree that the value of medical instruction would be greatly enhanced were the courses in materia medica made thorough rather than comprehensive.

UTAH AND NEVADA ADOPT RESOLUTIONS.

The following resolutions were adopted by the Utah State Medical Society and were then referred